The Quill

Spring 1950

The Quill

STUDENT LITERARY MAGAZINE

QUEENS COLLEGE

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

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Refutation

Frances McPherson

Cannot a man by his own strength,
Intrepid, rule his soul?
Diffusion curb within himself,
Create—and reach—his goal?
Why may not man forget his God
And live for self in pride,
Declare his will the only law,
High loyalty deride?
But if he looks within himself—
His guide: his heart, his mind—
And as his spirit binds itself
Within one soul's confine,
The swelling fires of his desires
Obscure his own north star.
As flames contest for highest place,
His prisoned soul they char.
Would not the strife of self-ruled life
Destroy its recompense?
Would not the drifting, filmy smoke
Arouse that disowned sense?
Yet wilful ones who through the flame
Look toward the smoke-dimmed Sun
And let His rays backfire the blaze;
In yielding, find they've won.

No Longer a Thief

ANN PERRY

"I beg your pardon," the little man said, "have you seen my cloud?"

Tuppy looked at him. His nose was long and drooped disconsolately. All of his clothes—tight-fitting shirt and pants, cap, and shoes—were gray. His face was smooth like a child's, and his eyes bounced merrily like a child's. His eyebrows raced tirelessly up and down his forehead. Tuppy was fascinated by him. "My, you're ugly," she marvelled.

"Well, I never particularly cared for freckles and pigtails myself," the little man replied in a singsong voice.

Tuppy sat quietly for a minute. "No, I haven't," she said.

"Haven't what?"

"Haven't seen your cloud."

"Oh, well, I really didn't exepect you to. People are stupid, you know. They can't even tell one cloud from another," the little man muttered as he settled himself on the rock beside Tuppy.

"Are you an elf?" Tuppy asked excitedly. Wait till she told her family about this!

"My dear child, I am a Macnar. We Macnars are the oldest and finest family of the little people. We have the responsibility of caring for the clouds. And it's not an easy task, let me tell you. They'd be roaming all over the universe if we didn't keep them in hand. I have lost mine, and I really must locate it." Tuppy was enchanted; she looked questioningly at him. "My name is Gerobald," he concluded.

"I'm very happy to know you. My name is Tuppy."

"Well, as long as we're both out in the fog, let's chat a bit before I go to search for that pesky cloud. Do you live near here?"

She waved her hand vaguely to the left. "Up there on top of the hill."

"Ah, yes, the brick house. I see it quite often when my duties bring me into this area. But, surely, you don't live alone?"

Tuppy shrugged. "I wish I did; then I'd be happy. I live with my parents. Father's a college professor; Mother doesn't do anything."

Gerobald looked a little discomfitted at this speech. "But what are you doing out here alone?" he asked.

"Oh," Tuppy grinned mischievously. "I'm punishing my parents."

"And just how do you intend to do that?" Gerobald was puzzled.

She explained eagerly, "It's simple. You see, I wanted to go to a picnic today; but Father wouldn't let me go because it was foggy. So, I'm hiding in the fog; and he'll have to come look for me. Father hates the fog, too." As

she finished her explanation, Tuppy leaned back and laughed. "Don't you think it's funny?" she giggled.

"You are a horrid little girl," accused Gerobald. "You should be ashamed of yourself."

"I don't see why; I think it's rather an exciting idea," Tuppy cut in.

"You should be ashamed of yourself because you are a thief," roared Gerobald.

Tuppy's breath caught in her throat. A fear of Gerobald stung her. "I'm not a thief. I may be bad, but I'm not a thief. You can't say that," she stormed at him.

He wiggled his droopy nose before he answered, "Ah, you may think you are not; but I can prove that you are. A thief is a person who steals, isn't he—isn't she?" As he said this, he leered at Tuppy. Dumbfounded, she nodded her head. "Well," he went on, "you take the love of your parents and give them nothing but unhappiness in return. That makes you a thief."

Tuppy gasped as he stared at her. "Oh, I think you're awful. But it's not true because my parents don't love me. They just keep me because the law says they have to." She felt quite triumphant. That would stop him!

"I shouldn't blame them if they threw you over a cliff," replied Gerobald testily. "Why do you say that they don't love you?"

"Why, because—they're always punishing me," she said sulkily.

"Surely, you don't think they don't love you because they punish you when you deserve to be punished?"

Tuppy thought for a moment. This idea had never occurred to her. Punishment had always been an inevitable and irrevocable thing, administered by adults, submitted to by children. It had been the foundation for her war against her parents. She was not sure whether or not she agreed with Gerobald. But if she changed her position now, she must admit that she was a thief. The thought of this was definitely distasteful. "Yes, I do," she stated.

Gerobald rose; his face was even with hers now. "Well," he hissed, "I think you're even more stupid than I did before. If you will go home and consider the problem without prejudice, I think you will be forced to admit that Gerobald is right."

"Oh, but—" began Tuppy.

Gerobald glowered. "My dear child, I really must be off and look for my cloud. It has been most disagreeable knowing you, and I hope that you will stop being such a stubborn little fool." He walked a few steps, turned and mocked, "Thief, thief, thief." The clouds billowed and swirled, and Gerobald was gone.

"I hate you," Tuppy screamed. Echoing back to her, the voice of Gerobald chanted, "Thief, thief." It was suddenly very still. The fog seemed to hang unshifting before her. She felt as if the weight of her body would pull her down into the earth. I'll smother, she thought. She put her hand on a large stone, feeling its roughness and dampness. This was reality; Gerobald was not. Determination pulled her to her feet. "I'll prove it to him," she whispered; "I'll just go back home and prove it to him." The path back to the house was hard to follow. Everywhere she turned the taunting figure of Gerobald rose before her. A root tripped her, and she lost her way when she came to the open stretch of meadow. Soon, however, she saw the living room light swimming through the fog.

I wish I had on a long dress with a train, Tuppy thought. If I did, I could drape the train over my arm and make a sweeping entrance like Aunt Mary did at her birthday party. Mother and Father might even curtsey to me the way we did to Aunt Mary. Well, dungarees would have to do. I'll just slip in and surprise them at lunch, she decided. As she reached for the door-knob, the door swung open. She looked up and gulped, "Father."

His tall, slouching figure loomed above her. He leaned a little forward as he peered at Tuppy. "Where have you been?" he demanded.

She sidled around him and into the hall as she answered, "Oh, Father, it's awfully foggy out. You've never seen such a fog. I just went down the path to the creek, and I got lost. Oh, Father, I was so lost." She let reproach color her voice as she continued, "I thought surely you'd come look for me, Father. I was lost and frightened. You didn't come, though." In the back of her brain a small triumph sat grinning.

Her father suddenly looked ten feet tall, a height he acquired only when he was angry. "Tuppy," he said in his slow, vibrant voice, "I spent two hours roaming around in that cursed fog looking for you. Your mother and I finally decided that if you had fallen over the cliff, we would have to wait until the fog cleared to find you. We decided further that if you had not fallen over the cliff, you would come home. It appears that you have. Now if you will go into the dining room, we will continue this discussion over a bowl of soup that I'm quite sure is now cold."

She was defeated; but she reassured herself that this was only a skirmish. She would have to be more careful. Her father walked before her as they went into the dining room. He still seemed to be extremely tall. "I'm sorry I'm late, Mother," she mumbled as she slipped into the empty chair. The soup was cold as her father had said; and Tuppy counted glug, glug, glug as she swallowed it.

"Where have you been?" asked her mother.

She let her mind go blank for a minute. She imagined a wall of fog and waited for an idea to settle in her mind. Suddenly it came. Breaking a cracker, she replied, "I was out watching God take a bath."

"You were—" her mother's voice faded away.

Her father cut in with a voice that warned her that she must retreat now or accept the consequences. "Tuppy," he said, "we'll have no more of that."

She hesitated only for an imperceptible second before she plunged on. "Well, I did. I saw God taking a bath in the clouds. And he was wearing pink underwear, too."

"Robert," her mother suggested weakly.

The storm broke, then, over her head. She could not move, but she could disconnect her mind from the present situation. In her mind she slipped out into the fog and searched down by the creek for Gerobald. Soon it was quiet. Her father must have stopped. Tuppy snatched a piece of bread and spread it with butter and jelly. She hoped that her parents would not notice that her hands were trembling.

Luncheon went slowly as her parents' conversation flowed around Tuppy. She dared not enter into it, but sat quietly, swivelling her head so that she could see first one and then the other of her parents. It was not until her father pushed back his empty coffee cup and lit a cigarette that she began to feel able to speak again. She waited quietly for the right moment and, then, eased into the conversation. She turned to her father. "Do you know," she began, "that a Macnar came up to me this morning and asked me to help him find his cloud?" She looked at her father and then at her mother, expecting to see enthusiasm in their faces. It was not there. She played her trump card. "His name was Gerobald," she declared proudly. When she looked at her father, she saw that frozen look that she dreaded.

"Go to your room," he commanded.

"But, Father, I did see him. I did talk to him," Tuppy remonstrated.

"Tuppy, go to your room this minute. I told you that you would be punished if you told any more of your tales."

"It's not a tale. I did see him. I did; I did," Tuppy cried, as she retreated from the room.

"Tuppy," he mother called in a disturbed voice.

It was a long way up the steps to her room. She went up slowly at first; then she hurried to reach her room before she cried. She went into the room and slammed the door to ease the hurt and anger she felt. She walked over to the window that looked out into the fog. "Oh, you're bad, Tuppy," she sobbed. "Why are you so bad? you're so bad that people think you're lying even when you're telling the truth." She pressed her forehead against the

glass and rocked her head from side to side so that the coolness touched her hot cheeks.

Slowly, slowly she heard footsteps coming up the stairs. They paused outside her door. She turned and faced the door. She didn't want to be spanked, but it seemed inevitable that she would be. The door swung open, and her father stood in the doorway. He came into the room and sat down on her bed. "I want to talk to you," he said.

"If you're going to spank me, I'd rather you'd just spank me and get it over with," she said gravely.

"Come here," he said. She dragged her way across the room. "Did you see Gerobald?" he said.

"Yes, Father, I did. I talked to him. He said awful things to me."

"But you didn't see God—"

"No, Father," she interrupted. She knew that this story had embarrassed him; in fact, the thought of his embarrassment had been her reason for telling it. "I made that up," she confessed.

"Now how do you expect people to believe you when half of what you say isn't true?"

"I thought you might enjoy it," she suggested.

"I did not enjoy it," he answered. There was a great emphasis on "not."

It was obvious that she was expected to say something. She could manage only, "Oh," but it passed the conversational ball back to her father.

"You're almost ten years old. It's time that you began to behave. If you don't, you'll get in the habit of telling wild tales and misbehaving; and you'll never be able to do anything else."

Tuppy felt that she must agree with the logic of this, but something else was bothering her. "Father, have I always been bad? Always, I mean?"

"You were the nicest baby I've ever known until you were three years old. What happened then the Lord only knows."

"Maybe I'm a changeling." This was a nice idea. It would take care of Gerobald, too.

Her father sighed before he said, "No, I'm afraid you're not. That would be too easy."

"I suppose I might try to be good," pondered Tuppy.

"Yes, you might."

"It wouldn't be as much fun as being bad. I'm not at all sure I'd like it. I'd have to be on time for lunch, and I couldn't set your alarm clock to go off at three o'clock in the morning, or run away. It would be awfully hard, Father."

"It probably would be hard at first, but you're not afraid of trying to do hard things. Mother and I will help you," her father encouraged.

She turned her face up to her father. If he was on her side, it wouldn't be so *very* hard. As Tuppy looked at her father, he answered her with a look of sudden affection that she so seldom saw. She suspected something that frightened her. "Father, do you love me?" she asked quietly.

"Yes."

"Does Mother love me?" she continued.

"Yes, she does."

And then she began to cry, not as before with the quick tears of present trouble, but with the deep sobs of real distress. Her father lifted her gently upon his lap, and she cried out all of her misery. When the tears no longer came, he offered her his handkerchief. "Maybe Gerobald was right," she sniffled.

"Do you want to talk about it?" he asked as he mopped her face.

"No," she murmured, "but I'll show Gerobald. He thinks he's so smart. I'll show him!"

She slipped her hand into his, ready to start toward the door; then she stopped, sighed, blinked before she said, "All right, Father, if you're sure I *can* be good, I'm willing to try. I still don't think it sounds attractive, but I don't want to be a thief."

As they went out the door, Tuppy heard a sound suspiciously like a self-satisfied chuckle. It was not her father; she was looking at him, Gerobald. "If that's Gerobald, Father, he might as well go away. I'm not afraid of him now."

The Letter

Ann Stafford

She stood there a minute looking at it—the small piece of paper that had brought such bewilderment, such pain in its wake. Quickly she lowered her lids, seeking to blot it out, but still it rose before her—the delicate pink paper with the large monogrammed "M" at the top and the faintly sweet scent that drifted up to tickle her nose. She made a slight motion with her hand as though to throw it away, to get it out of sight, but then she stopped. She had only this hour to herself before her husband would come through the door which she had just closed behind her. He would come ready for supper and talk of the day, plans for the evening. She must decide. She could not evade the letter any longer; even now the words seemed to leap at her with irresistible force, pounding into her brain like small hammers, each word bruising her heart with relentless energy and resounding in her ears with a maddening monotony. Perhaps, she thought, perhaps if I think of something else, I'll forget it.

She turned her eyes toward the window and looked out at the tall trees with their bleak, barren limbs stretching into the sky. Pleading skeletons of the past, she thought. And even as she thought this, the phrase fixed itself in her mind. Skeleton of the past—this letter is a skeleton of the past. But what a funny skeleton—no bones except a few words on a piece of paper. The thought irritated her, and she moved again to rid herself of it. I just won't think of it. I'll, I'll repeat some poetry. Let's see now—

"Oh, my luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
Oh, my luve is like the melodie
That's sweetly—"

No, she thought, that's no good. She took her left hand and pressed it hard against her forehead. As she did so, she felt a slight tingling in her skin. Jerking her hand away, she looked at it and saw that her wedding band had been turned around, causing the small diamonds to cut into her forehead. Somehow, just looking at it made the image of the letter flash before her.

"Dear Jeanne," it read, "I suppose you think it odd to hear from me after all these many years of silence, but truly, dear, you have never been out of my thoughts; and so when I heard this spicy little tid-bit, I just had to write you. 'I've got to write Jeanne,' I said to my husband (of course, you know I married John). 'She'll just howl when she hears this.' 'Cause truly, dear, I knew that you'd just never forgive me if I didn't write im-

mediately; so here I am. Of course. I didn't know your present address (you haven't written in ages, you know, but I won't fuss this time); so I sent it to your mother, hoping that she'd forward it.

"Well, I won't keep you in suspense any longer; so don't bite your nails, dear. Oh, I can just see you now, all eager and impatient at my ramblings, just like you always were. Well darling, here goes. Remember the Randy Dalton that you were so crazy about when we were at Columbia U., and remember how he never would even look at you? Oh, I can see you now, all aflutter because you passed him in the all. And those simply outlandish schemes you cooked up to make him date you! That's what I love about you—your determination. Never would give up, would you, dear, or don't you remember?"

Oh don't I remember? How could I forget? Remember the day in the science building, Randy, when I fell down the steps just so you'd have to pick me up? And you smiled—

"Well, love, perhaps you don't remember, but I do; and so when I heard this I just had to write. Darling, he wasn't stuck up; he was scared! He was actually scared to make friends because of what might happen if he did. Jeanne, we would never have dreamed, truly, dear; but just let me tell you. Randy Dalton was (and may still be, for all we know) the secret ringleader of a Communist group right on campus! Isn't that something? And to think, there you were just dying to date him! Suppose, just suppose you had! I shudder at the thought. It's almost unbelievable, isn't it? When John came home and told me that he had heard it from Pete Summers who works for the F. B. I., why, I just refused to believe it. But they have proof, dear, and they're still trying to pin some evidence on him."

—Was that why you were always so quiet, Randy? Were you scared to fall in love? Is that why you avoided me all those years? Didn't you know that in the eyes of the world you would be a traitor? You know you hated traitors. You were almost thrown out of history class one day when you stood up and denounced Benedict Arnold. I know every word you said that day by heart.

"Let a man know his own mind," you said. "Let him choose either one side or the other and stay there, and if he hasn't got sense enough to do that, then let him be damned!"

"Mr. Dalton," the professor said, "if you can't watch your language and method of addressing the class, I'm afraid that I'll have to ask you to leave the room."

You shouted, "If this is a democratic country, then why can't a man speak his own mind? You have said, sir, that one of the four freedoms is freedom of speech."

"Mr. Dalton, what you are forgetting is that we are privileged to use those freedoms only so long as we do not misuse them. In your case I would recommend that you take your seat immediately, and we will resume the lecture."

You sat down, Randy, but your face was pale. Perhaps if I had thought what your words were implying, but I didn't. All I could think of was the way your anger made your eyes almost black and how dashing you looked with your brows drawn together like a thunder-cloud. I loved you so, Randy. Didn't you know? Couldn't you tell it by the way I looked at you? What is it Trudy says at the end of her letter?

"I guess we don't always realize our blessings, do we, dear? 'Poor, dear, Jeanne,' I said to myself when I heard the news. Why, the blessed child might have ruined her life if she had gone around with that—that, well, that traitor! Now honestly, dear, I've been thinking quite a lot about it since I heard that your old beau was and is mixed up in this business, and I just simply shudder to think what could have happened to your reputation, to say nothing of your peace of mind when you found out. Why, if you had been seriously involved, it would have been ghastly! And while I'm letting my imagination run away with me, just stop and think what would have happened if you had been engaged to him (oh, perish the thought!) married to him! What on earth would you have done then? But that's a silly question, isn't it, dear? There is only one thing you could have done, and that's get a divorce. Personally, if I had suddenly found out that my husband was one of those Communists, why I think I'd shoot him—and myself, too! I'd probably have my faith in human nature completely destroyed for all time. Now, Jeanne dearest, please don't get upset by these innocent ramblings of your 'feeble-minded' old friend, but sometimes I just get carried away. Like I said to John the other night—'John, I said—' "

Jeanne was awakened from her reverie by footsteps coming up the stair. She recognized the jaunty tread of her husband. Her glance darted back to the letter still clutched in her hand. She stared at it a second longer, her fingers spasmodically loosening and tightening around it as the footsteps came nearer and nearer to the door. A puzzled look clouded her eyes, footsteps wavered there uncertainly for a moment; then she tore the letter across, folded it again and yet again. Walking swiftly to the open window, she scattered the pieces to the winds, watching them flutter aimlessly around and then down to the pavement where they were lost under the trampling feet.

"Goodbye," she whispered to the vanishing fragments. "Goodbye and thanks." Turning swiftly, she moved forward to greet her husband, her love and acceptance shining in her eyes.

"Hello, Randy," she said.

The Message

Ruth Mason Williams

Seated at the grand piano, Jon touched the keys with stiff, tense fingers that showed their two years of idleness in the mechanical, unfeeling, labored melody which was played over and over again. His shoulders were stooped as those of an old man and his brow furrowed with wrinkles. Once coal-black hair, now streaked with gray, fell tousled about his face, as he struggled for the coordination of muscles, fingers, and keys. At times he paused, uttered sounds which I recognized as those of disgust, then continued in an aimless wandering over the keyboard. He seemed sad as he sat bent over the piano, cautiously picking out notes that seemed never to go together. Still, he doggedly persisted in his endeavor to master that which he had undertaken. Wrong notes came again and again. Inharmonious chords struck my ears. As errors grew more pronounced and frequent, the movement of his fingers became slower until the task was given up with a violent blow of hands upon the keyboard that sent a loud and crashing crescendo of discordant sounds thundering through the room. Dropping his head into uplifted palms, he sobbed like a child.

Standing on the stairway, looking down through the open double doors of the music room, I watched him walk dejectedly to the window that overlooked the garden. His bowed head and slumped appearance, giving a picture of utter despondency, was in striking contrast to the cheerful room of gay furnishings. Dancing sunshine flowed into the room and seemingly sliding down its rays the many lively noises of spring—the lusty song of the robin and unceasing chatter of the gray squirrels as they played on the lawn. He looked out of place, a foreigner to the sparkling brilliance of the day that shone with hope and love, faith and brightness, all that is good and happy. In his face I saw the aloneness, the complete withdrawal from his surroundings. A feeling of failure was evident in his face and actions as he gripped the window sill and kicked at the wall in apparent rage.

"I can't do it!" he sobbed. "I can't! I can't!"

I caught hold of the banisters and bit my lip to keep from crying out, to keep him from knowing that I was there watching him.

Between sobs he cried, "It's gone! It's just not there." He was silent for a moment and then, with both arms flung out before him, as if grasping for a straw that wasn't there, he pleaded, "Let me play. Let me play."

Tears were sliding down my face as I silently went downstairs and out into the garden. The sun met me, peeking out from behind the apple tree, and with its brightness told me that there was hope with every dawning of

the day—undeniable hope, as long as there are sunshine, sky, and rain, budding flowers, and singing birds. There is hope everywhere, I thought, everywhere, but in Jon. Drying my tears with its warmth, the sunshine seemed to whisper in my ear, "hope, hope, hope." My Jon, finally, has tried to play, I thought. He sat at the piano and actually touched the keys! Surely there is hope now. Surely his attempt, after so long a time of abstinence from the piano means something. As if to confirm my thoughts a bluebird flew by me and perched itself in the cherry tree that was bursting with blossoms. I remembered a poem, "The Bluebird Of Happiness." I recited what I could remember of it to myself; "The king upon his throne, the jester at his feet, the artist, the actress, the man on the street—It's a life of smiles, and a life of tears, it's a life of hopes and a life of fears; a blinding torrent of rain and a brilliant burst of sun; biting, tearing pain and bubbling, sparkling fun.—it's all the same, it's in the game, the bitter and the sweet. If things don't look so cheerful, just show a little fight—for every bit of darkness, there's a little bit of light, for every bit of hatred, there's a little bit of love, for every cloudy morning there's a midnight moon above—."

"For every bit of darkness, there's a little bit of light," I repeated. I sat down near a bed of snowdrops and looked at their bowed little faces, shining white in the sunlight. The greenness of the lawn blended so beautifully with the verdant trees and plants and with the azure sky. So much beauty, I thought, and yet so much unhappiness and ugliness in spite of it. Back of the hyacinth beds, the apple trees were blooming, and the azaleas looked as if they were on fire. I looked toward the house. Jon was still standing at the window, as if transfixed. I looked back at the snowdrops. Jon himself had planted them. He liked to look at them from the music room as he worked. In his own words he had said, "They give me inspiration for my music." He used to stand there as he was doing now and smile at the dainty white flowers as they got their faces washed in the soft breeze.

I knew what the garden, and especially the snowdrops, meant to him. He thought of them as tiny, delightful measures in God's whole, big rhapsody of life. He saw more in this small plot of ground than most would see if they could view the whole world at a glance. This was his world—this, the natural and the beautiful. Through nature he saw and understood the ways of God and man. Through his comprehensive perspective he gained peace of mind and love of all things. His are—his touch on the piano and his compositions—seemed to be a reflection of nature—brisk, clean, and fresh. He had loved the garden. It had given him happiness and inspiration that had made him one of the greatest pianists in the country. But as I looked at him still standing at the window, I did not see that expression of

happiness and peace that I once saw. I saw the face of a man who in spirit was more dead than alive, one who did not smile at the snowdrops and the garden, who did not smile because he could not see them and never would. My Jon was blind.

He had lost his eyes on Iwo Jima. In losing them he had lost the snowdrops and the garden, all nature that had fed him with inspiration was no longer within his reach. It was as if the sunshine and flowers were no longer there. When the birds sang, he didn't hear them—his disillusionment had choked all feelings except bitterness. The piano remained untouched for about two years except for occasional caresses given it by the hands that had once played so beautifully and thrilled many an audience. It was pitiful to watch him feel his way with his cane to the piano, rub his hands over its mahogany finish, then turn away from it, never touching the keys.

Hope surged through my veins that day I witnessed this first attempt at playing. But occasions for hope were few and far between. Haunting memories of successful New York concerts kept coming back to me, and, perhaps, to Jon too. I knew very little of what he was thinking, although I sensed his despondency. Staying inside, always, he refused to go out, to see anyone, or even to listen to the radio. Rejecting any and all help, he felt his way about the house with his cane, sometimes falling or stumbling over a chair or the end of a rug. I knew that he was stumbling in his inner world too, that he was lost in a big, dark, dreary world that frightened him.

I prepared his meals, cleaned house, worked in the garden, trying to keep any hope left inside me alive. The long days and nights, the vain attempts at helping him were all unbearable. He could not find himself. I did not know how to help, what to do. In his own lonely universe of darkness he wandered in circles, unable to find the path that would lead him out. I could not reach him in that dark cavern of seclusion that must have been so strange to him. His had been a life of colors—bright and cheerful colors that had fused and merged to give life and beauty to everything. Now his life was only darkness, blackness, complete darkness, a foreboding blackness that was completely strange to him. I could not help him, reach him. I knew that his help had to come from a greater source than mine.

Yesterday afternoon he received a letter from the Institute for the Blind, informing all veterans that courses in broom and cabinet making were now being offered. I read the letter to him, but afterwards wished that I hadn't. The burst of temper that came forth frightened me. Picking up a chair, he flung it to the floor where it broke into a dozen pieces.

"Make brooms," he said vehemently, "make brooms, they say! I, spend the rest of my life tying pieces of straw together so that people who feel

sorry for me can buy my remarkable products?" With a sob stifling the ferociousness of his voice, he left the room in a rage.

I heard him go upstairs. With the letter open in my hands, I looked at the words that sounded so terrible and fervently wished that I had not read the letter. He came downstairs and went out the front door. I sat, frozen to the spot with fear for a second or two, and then rushed to the door. He was feeling his way down the walk with his cane. I called to him but he didn't answer. By the time I got half way down the walk, a cab drove up, Jon got in with the help of the driver, and they drove off before I could get there. He must have called for a cab while he was upstairs, I thought. I went slowly back into the house, not daring to think. Panic gripped me as I wandered from room to room, too nervous knows where! Hours passed. It was getting dark. I forgot about dinner. Finally about nine o'clock I had worn myself out worrying and went up to bed. After an eternity of waiting, I started to call the police. I was composing the lines that I would say to the police: "I want you to find my husband—he may have—." I heard a car door slam. Putting the phone down, I ran to the window. By the street light I saw that it was Jon! Relief swept over me. I wanted to run downstairs to meet him, to tell him that his blindness didn't matter, that he didn't have to make brooms. But I kept silent. I knew I couldn't help. I hadn't been able to help so far. The tap, tapping of his cane told me that he was coming upstairs. He came into the room and dressed for bed. I acted as if I were asleep. He lay there not speaking, just smoking cigarette after cigarette. I wanted to speak, to break the horrible silence, to ask him where he had been, but I didn't. After a while he walked out of the room and down the steps. A few moments later I heard him picking out a few notes on the piano. Then hesitatingly he began playing, slowly and a little difficultly at first. Then he played!

Floating up the steps came the most beautiful music that had ever touched my ears—and heart—music that sounded like angels' harps and voices of cherubim. My Jon has found what he lost, I though, getting out of bed and starting for the door. But where did he find it? I asked myself.

"Mary," he shouted, "Mary, I can play! I can play!" He called me, I thought, for the first time since he has been home. He called me—and he's playing! I ran down the stairs.

He sat at the piano until dawn, playing everything he ever knew. I sat beside him in an easy chair, not willing to leave my Jon who had been given back to me—and to himself. He laughed, loud, hysterical laughter that rang to the rafters with the joyous song of rebirth. I watched his fingers fly over the keyboard as he played his favorite with more feeling than he had ever had. Moonlight shown through the window and his face

that glistened with animation and happiness. A warm feeling of love and contentment swept over me. I sat there drinking in the loveliness of the music when I thought—why this sudden awakening? How did his self-confidence come back to quickly? Where did he go this afternoon? I found myself asking "what" out loud. Jon stopped playing. He turned to me and spoke softly, more gently than I had heard him speak in quite some time.

"Mary, when I left here this afternoon, I wanted to kill myself."

Grasping his hand tightly, I raised my face to heaven and gave my thanks that he hadn't done it.

"The cab driver drove me to the bridge, but he talked me out of it. It's funny how a stranger can talk to you and make you listen when you won't listen to anyone else, isn't it?"

I squeezed his hand as if in affirmation.

"He said that he knew how I felt. He talked to me for quite a while. I don't think he said anything important. I realized now that he was just stalling for time. He knew who I was and said he wouldn't want anything to happen to me—especially when he could do something about it. Mary, he tried so hard to help me that I agreed to get back in the cab. I asked him to bring me home, but he wouldn't."

"He wouldn't take you home?" I asked.

"No, he wouldn't take me. He said that since he had done me a favor, he wanted me to do one for him. He had a brother who was making his first public appearance as a pianist at Symphony Hall tonight and he said he thought the boy would get a thrill out of knowing that I had heard him. It seems that I am this boy's idol. Well, I guess it must have touched me a little to hear him say that; so I went and the cab driver went with me. He wouldn't let me go backstage afterwards to meet him. Didn't want to get him upset, he said." He leaned forward and said almost reverently, "Mary, that pianist, that Burlingame fellow, played as well as anyone I have ever heard. He played so beautifully—such depth, such feeling. I don't know what it was," he said, running his hand through his hair, "but the music was odd—very strange. It was as if it were saying something." Rubbing his hand thoughtfully over his chin, he said with a great deal of force, "Yes, Mary, it was saying something. It had a message in it—a message that told me I could play."

Message? I thought. A message that told him he could play? He did play, though. Something did it. After two years of not being able to play, he wouldn't sit down and play without there having been a reason. I couldn't understand. I let go of his hand and leaned back in the chair, trying to figure out the riddle. I did not hear Jon leave, but he was gone.

I walked to the window. Streaks of light were becoming clear on the horizon. The darkness was broken by the coming of the day—a new day, a fresh day, a bright day. The dawn was breaking. The message—what does it mean I thought. I saw Jon carefully feeling his way toward the bed of snowdrops. I smiled. He had remembered where they were. His shoulders were not stooped now—they were straight and broad—and he bore an air of confidence as he knelt beside the snowdrops. Taking one of the white blossoms in his hand, he caressed its dewy face. What a change this mysterious message has wrought in my Jon, I thought. I can't understand. As I stood there gazing out the window, I heard a noise on the front porch. Mechanically I walked to the front door to get the paper. Returning to the music room, I sat down and glanced through it, not reading it, but nervously turning the pages while I attempted to solve the mystery of the message. I couldn't understand and had almost resolved to forget it when a newspaper article caught my eye. It began:

"Michael Burlingame, blind pianist, gave his first concert at Symphony Hall last night."

I walked again to the window, a little more thoughtful than confused. There, raising its bald head above the horizon was the radiant sun. Streaks of red and gold spread across the sky, reflecting their brilliance in the glassy wetness of the garden. The earth came alive with the morning chattering of the birds. The sun rose. Its beaming, bubbling, sparkling face smiling its happy radiance over all the world. "For every bit of darkness there's a little bit of light," I thought. Jon was walking slowly but confidently toward the house, a contented, peaceful expression on his face. With the dawn came the understanding of the message—the message in sound for those who could not read it in the morning's dawning of the flowers, for those who are not really blind—just sightless.

The Escape

Gertie Nelson

He crawled along the ground, digging the dirt with his fingers, and slowly edged toward the nearest clump of trees; they were only about twenty-five feet away, but they appeared to him to be at least a mile distant. He recalled the instructions he had received concerning his escape from the concentration camp. The old Frenchman had dropped a note in his plate when he had brought the prisoners their evening meal. It had explained how he was to evade the guards when they themselves were eating; he was to have aid in getting through the iron gate; but after that he was to stop for nothing, for then there would be no one to help him until he reached the farmhouse where he could find a horse saddled and ready to carry him to the French lines.

As he slid closer and closer to the trees, he became worried. He had succeeded in passing through the gates, but by now they would have discovered his absence from the cell. Finally he reached the first tree, and quickly he got to his feet and moved behind the trunk of it. He stopped and listened. Only the ordinary sounds reached his ear, but they assumed supernatural tones and caused his every muscle to become tense. A rabbit brushed against his foot as it hurried by, and an owl hooted overhead.

Then he slipped to the next tree—and the next—and the next. Then he heard the siren as it screeched out in the night, proclaiming his escape. He knew he must hurry; his whole life depended upon time. He darted among the rest of the trees, and then he saw the spacious field open before him. He began to run as fast as he could; yet he realized he must not exhaust his strength at the very outset, for there remained still a long way to go before he would reach the farmhouse. He heard the bloodhounds, a favorite method of the Germans for tracking down escaped prisoners, as they howled and yelped, tugging at their leashes and eager to be on their way. He knew he had a good start on them, but he also knew he had not a moment to lose. He crossed the ravine, almost slipping once and losing his balance. The stars above shone brightly and seemed to be his enemies rather than his friends. He felt their light outlining his form in the dark night. He heard the men and dogs nearing the trees; soon they too would be in the open field and would be able to discern his shape before he could reach the cluster of trees that bordered the river. Suddenly a cloud glided in front of the moon, and darkness fell like a blanket over the entire countryside. His path was obliterated temporarily, but a sixth sense directed him, and on he sped.

At last he gained the group of trees and reached out for support. He rested only a minute to catch his breath, then fled to the bank of the river. Nearer and nearer his pursuers came. He followed the course of the river and heard the water gurgling as it flowed along its path. He was unable to find the crossing anywhere; he had estimated that it should be about where he was.

Then he glanced over his shoulder and saw a man in a uniform being pulled along by a thin, gray dog, sniffing along with his nose to the ground.

Then he found it—the plank across the river at a narrow point where it curved. He bounded onto the plank and raced along it as rapidly as was safe to do so. Then he jumped to the opposite bank and turned to pull the plank in behind him. With all his strength he turned it over and pushed it behind some bushes. Then he stopped long enough to see the soldiers and dogs standing at the edge of the river on the other side. The dogs had lost his track at the water and did not know which way to turn.

He then moved on up the slight incline and flew along the path. The wind had risen and was moaning in the trees; but even though he was frightened, he halted not a second. Presently he could see dimly the farmhouse in the distance. He went directly to the waiting horse inside. Having mounted, he allowed the animal free reign. The wind slapped his face and revived his weakened spirit. As they passed among the trees, branches attempted to impede their haste, but on they flew.

He succeeded in reaching the French lines and safety and was received by his friends who had been anxiously awaiting his appearance.

Little Things

Murphy Alexander

Little things make up this life,
Details, a masterpiece;
Each one creates a moment's joy,
Together they are peace.
A nod, a smile, a friendly deed,
Seem each a separate part,
And yet they fall to their own place—
The pattern of a heart.

EDITORIALS

Queens College and the Community

LILLIAN BARBER

College life for the Queens student is not limited to the activities and studies of the campus. It is rather made up of the many services and opportunities which are available to students in the city of Charlotte. Perhaps the interest in civic groups and church work has grown out of a desire to make ourselves at home in a community; perhaps we have entered into these tasks with a consciousness of our need of practical experience, which will make our theoretical knowledge more complete. But regardless of the reasons which promote the participation, there are few students who do not co-operate.

Since Queens is a Christian college, there are a great many girls who major in religious education and who plan to go into that field after graduating. In accordance with this, there are numerous opportunities in neighboring churches, providing service in every phase of church work. There are always positions open for teachers in the church school classes, for leaders in young people's activities, for pianists for youth groups. A few girls have part time jobs in these churches, which actually pay a small salary and give good experience in leadership training. Some of the larger choirs in Charlotte use some of the music students; a few children's choirs are directed by the same students. Much of this type of work has been encouraged by the training classes which are taught every year in a local church under the direction of prominent leaders. These groups have given additional training to regular school classes and have been of great benefit, especially to those who will teach in vacation church schools.

Sociology majors get practical experience in their work with city welfare departments. Music majors are participants in orchestras and choral groups. Majors in psychology help give tests to school children. One campus group has fostered a full recreational and instructive program in a children's home, assuming the responsibility of directing games, dancing, sewing, reading, and singing. Several girls are leaders of Girl Scout troops.

In the civic campaigns which are emphasized each year Queens girls add their energies and time to secure help for the Red Cross, the Community

Chest, the Heart Drive. In the Y. W. C. A. there are always demands for students to assist in the instruction of swimming, indoor sports, and handcrafts. It is with the idea that practical experience leads to wider service that we undertake these obligations. By becoming a part of a community we assume that a college campus can be of great value to its environment and that a city can offer attractive, useful opportunities which foster well-rounded, intelligent living.

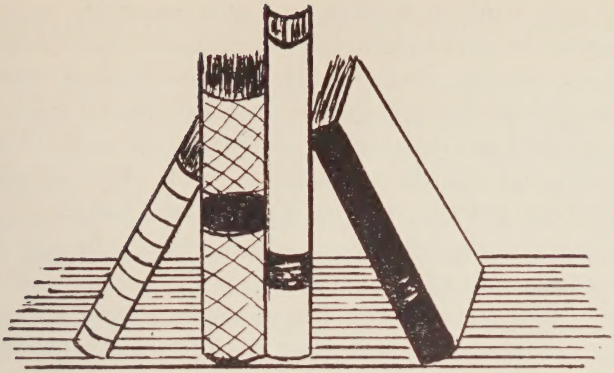
Farewell Thanks

BETTINA MARABLE

As a member of the senior class, the editor looks back on her four years at Queens and begins to wonder, "What have I learned?", or maybe, "Have I learned anything?" Perhaps it is an excellent time for each one of us at Queens to stop for a few moments and take an inventory of our school life.

When we came to Queens as freshmen, most of us were somewhat immature and childish individuals, who had scarcely been away from home for any length of time. It is Queens' aim to help us mature—to help us grow physically, mentally, and spiritually. Perhaps we all have not developed in each of these three ways, but surely we will find that we have grown in at least one of these ways. It hardly seems possible that any girl, no matter whom she may be, could live and study at Queens for four years and not be a better person for having been there. It is entirely possible that we never fully realize what Queens has offered us, what she has done for us, how very much she has taught us.

As we stop to think, we find that very few of us have acquired as much of the knowledge of facts and theory from books as perhaps our professors would wish that we had acquired. Nevertheless—and I am sure I speak for some of the graduates—we have acquired one knowledge, a rather intangible knowledge. We have learned how to live—how to live happily and unafraid. We have learned how to live closely with people and to like them for the good that is in them (no matter how little that may be); to like them for what they are and not for what they might be if only we could change them. If, when we leave Queens, we do not have a broader knowledge of human understanding, then perhaps we never will. To Queens—students, faculty, and administration—as this year's graduates bid you farewell, the editor wishes to say for all a sincere, "Thank you!"



Book Reviews

Theodore Bonnet: The Mudlark

Rebecca Scholl

In an English history book written about the reign of Queen Victoria we might see a small footnote in reference to the Wheeler case. Historians seldom dwell on such trifles while an author, Theodore Bonnet, uses the incident as a key which opens a real and fascinating story. *The Mudlark* is the revelation of intimate happenings in Victoria's household at Windsor Castle.

Victoria is remembered as the family queen, the sovereign who made it fashionable for every family to raise nine thoroughbred children. Ironically there was in her day, as always, an element of the population which knew not education, health, or decency—let alone family life. These people fought for and grabbed their livelihood from the slums around the wharves. And because they picked copper nails from the mud to sell, they were known as mudlarks.

Such a little mudlark was Wheeler, about whom history footnotes an extraordinary event. He was but a seven-year-old child with large eyes, wizened and scared, that peered out from the collar of a man's overcoat. Because he had a little more pluck than the average mudlark, one day Wheeler lifted himself from the mud and went to see the Queen. Some kindly sailor had once told the boy that Victoria was the Mother of England; and, since he did not have a mother of his own, he particularly wanted to see this one.

Wheeler stole a ride to Windsor on a river barge. He never dreamed of actually entering the sacred place, but circumstances abetted him in making his way into not only the courtyard but the castle itself. Creeping on hands and knees through the dim halls, he was startlingly hurled down a coal chute. When he recovered from the shock of landing in the cellar, Wheeler groped his way upstairs and into the royal dining room, where he was discovered by two sympathetic servants, who hid him behind a curtain.

That evening during dinner, at which Prime Minister Disraeli was present, the Queen noticed a shimmering of the curtain and then a coal-blackened little face spying at her. She no doubt uttered a shriek; however, *The London Times* reported that after the urchin was removed from the room, the Queen resumed eating.

But that was not the end of the evening's escapades for Wheeler. Several hours later Disraeli asked to be shown the throne room; and there sitting on the majestic seat, was the pitiful, sooty mudlark. Disraeli, relieving the situation, remarked to a perturbed guard, "Have *you* never wished to sit upon a throne? *I* have!"

The following day *The Times* gave an account in partial truth to the intruder's visit, but that would not satisfy some politicians who insisted that the villain had come to murder the Mother of England. The lieutenant of the Household Guards was threatened his job if he did not secure a confession from Wheeler, who could only stare with tears making paths through the soot and say, "Blimy."

Before drawing the Wheeler case to a climax, the author concluded several concurrent sub-plots of the story. The stormy romance of Slattery and Noonan, the two kitchen servants who befriended Wheeler, was halted abruptly. Slattery was exiled from England by a radical party which believed him guilty of conspiring with Wheeler to kill Victoria. A successful love match, on the other hand, was developed between a young maid-in-waiting and the handsome lieutenant of the Guards. Their marriage was one of the few matters of which Victoria disapproved but about which she could do nothing.

Lytton Strachey in his biography of Queen Victoria described her as a perfect woman and sovereign, who moved complacently among "friendly flounces of sprigged muslin and the trees and grass at Kensington," her favorite home. Andre Maurois in his biography of Disraeli portrayed the English statesman as a dashing cavalier in top hat, gold cane, flashing rings, and white gloves. Theodore Bonnet, however, in the one book, *The Mudlark,* gives a more intimate picture of true-to-life character than either of the other authors. He revealed the Queen's nature by indicating a few of her human faults and by showing how subtly not only the Prime Minister influenced her

but also a simple, rather crude "gillie," who had been formerly a loyal servant to Albert.

Bonnet won the hearts of his readers for Disraeli by ending his interesting story with the Prime Minister's fighting for the cause of Wheeler. In the austere British Parliament Disraeli rose and tactfully told the legislators that Wheeler was made a mudlark by society. He was born without a father's name, and his mother had died of tetanus caused by unsanitary conditions. Disraeli ventured to say, moreover, that the mudlark who went to see the Queen would be more likely to hear the Cockaigne bells of happiness than many a person of higher rank who gave up his dreams and ambitions for worldiness. By this great oration Disraeli gained a prison sentence reduced to three months for the mudlark, respect and applause for himself, and the favorable appraisal of a book.

The Forest

MURPHY ALEXANDER

Green and cool,
Tall and strong,
Thick and crowded
Stands the forest
In the light of day.
Dark and lonely,
Mighty, frightening,
Living, threatening,
Towers the forest
As light fades away.